

Message Text

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PAGE 01 NAIROB 10318 121537Z
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AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

S E C R E T NAIROBI 10318

EXDIS

DEPT PASS USDEL SECRETARY

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: SO US KE ET MASS

SUBJECT: GROWING KENYAN CONCERN RE SOMALIA THREAT

REFS: A) STATE 188052; B) STATE 189633

SUMMARY: WE HAVE RECEIVED IN PAST FEW DAYS SEVERAL INDICATIONS OF
INCREASING KENYAN CONCERN OVER SOMALIA THREAT. SENIOR GOK DEFENSE
OFFICIAL, WHILE CONTINUING TO ACKNOWLEDGE DESIRABILITY OF EVENTUALLY
DISLODGING SOVIETS FROM SOMALIA, HAS INDICATED IN NO UNCERTAIN TERMS

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SECRET

PAGE 02 NAIROB 10318 121537Z

THAT NOW, WITH SOMALI INVASION OF ETHIOPIA TAKING PLACE, IS NOT TIME
FOR USG TO PROVIDE WEAPONS OF ANY TYPE TO SOMALIA. SUCH WEAPONS,
KENYANS ARE CONVINCED, WOULD INITIALLY BE USED, DIRECTLY OR
INDIRECTLY, AGAINST ETHIOPIA AND SUBSEQUENTLY AGAINST KENYA. WE
ARE INCLINED TO CONCUR IN THIS KENYAN ASSESSMENT OF SOMALI
INTENTIONS OVER LONGER TERM AND HOPE THAT TIMING AND IMPLEMENTATION
OF DECISION IN PRINCIPLE TO PROVIDE ARMS TO SOMALIA WILL REFLECT

THIS CONCERN. END SUMMARY.

1. FOLLOWING AMBASSADOR LE MELLE'S PRESENTATION OF CREDENTIALS TO PRESIDENT KENYATTA AUGUST 10 IN MOMBASA, PRESIDENTIAL PERMSEC KARIITHI EXPRESSED PRIVATELY TO DCM HIS COUNTRY'S GROWING APPREHENSIONS RE GROWING THREAT TO KENYA'S TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY AND SECURITY POSED BY SOMALIA. HE SAID KENYA GOVERNMENT IS CONVINCED THAT SOMALI SEIZURE OF ALL OR MOST OF ETHIOPIA'S OGADEN PROVINCE WILL, EVEN THOUGH SUBSEQUENTLY RESISTED BY ETHIOPIA, ONLY WHET SOMALIA'S APPETITE AND CAPABILITIES FOR SEIZURE OF ETHNIC-SOMALI-INHABITED NORTHEASTERN KENYA.

2. WHEN DCM ASKED WHETHER SOMALIA, IF IT SUCCEEDED IN SEIZING AND HOLDING OGADEN, MIGHT NOT FIND IT IN ITS INTEREST TO MAKE PEACE WITH KENYA, KARIITHI REPLIED "WE ARE NOT GOING TO BE TAKEN IN BY THOSE PEOPLE". AS EXAMPLE OF SOMALI DUPLICITY, KARIITHI MENTIONED JULY VISIT TO KENYA OF SOMALIA VICE PRESIDENT KULMIE WHO, AT SAME TIME AS HE WAS PROPOSING RAPPROCHEMENT TO KENYANS AND FORMATION OF JOINT BORDER COMMISSION, WAS PRIVATELY TELLING KENYAN ETHNIC-SOMALIS THAT IT WOULD ONLY BE MATTER OF TIME BEFORE NORTHEASTERN KENYA WOULD BE INTEGRATED INTO "GREATER SOMALIA".

3. TURNING TO RECENT USG DECISION "IN PRINCIPLE" TO SUPPLY WEAPONS TO SOMALIA FOR "DEFENSIVE PURPOSES", KARIITHI DID NOT REQUEST REVERSAL OF THIS DECISION. HOWEVER, HE WARNED OF DIFFICULTIES WE MIGHT HAVE IN IMPLEMENTING SUCH A POLICY POINTING TO
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SECRET

PAGE 03 NAIROB 10318 121537Z

FAILURE OF SOVIET ARMS SUPPLY POLICY WHICH HAD REQUIRED PLEDGES BY SOMALIA THAT SOVIET-SUPPLIED WEAPONS WOULD NOT BE USED AGAINST NEIGHBORING COUNTRIES.

4. FROM VARIETY OF KENYAN SOURCES WE ARE GETTING IMPRESSION THAT US DECISION IN PRINCIPLE TO PROVIDE ARMS TO SOMALIA IS HAVING UNSETTLING EFFECT, PARTICULARLY AMONG MEMBERS OF ARMED FORCES. FOR EXAMPLE, COMMANDER OF KENYA NAVY KIMARO, WHO HAS ALWAYS BEEN EXTREMELY FRIENDLY TO AMERICANS AND HAD BEEN RESPONSIBLE IN CONSIDERABLE MEASURE FOR WARMTH AND EFFICIENCY WITH WHICH U.S. NAVY VESSELS HAVE BEEN RECEIVED IN PORT OF MOMBASA, TOLD AMBASSADOR AUGUST 9 IRONICALLY THAT HE SUPPOSED THAT NEXT U.S. ARMED FORCES CEREMONIAL FLY-BY WOULD BE OVER MOGADISCIO RATHER THAN NAIROBI. HE WAS REFERRING TO SUCCESSFUL NAIROBI FLY-BY ON KENYA INDEPENDENCE DAY LAST DECEMBER 12 BY USMC CARRIER AIRCRAFT BASED ON USS GUAM.)

5. IN AUGUST 12 MEETING, DEFENSE MINISTRY PERMSEC KIEREINI TOOK EVEN STRONGER LINE THAN KARIITHI RE POSSIBLE U.S. ARMS SUPPLY TO SOMALIA. HE SAID THAT GOK HAD JUST ADVISED BRITISH THAT, HOWEVER DESIRABLE IT MIGHT BE TO REDUCE SOVIET INFLUENCE IN SOMALIA, NOW IS NOT THE TIME TO SUPPLY WEAPONS TO SOMALIA WHEN IT IS ENGAGED IN FULL

SCALE INVASION OF ETHIOPIA. HE EXPRESSED HOPE THAT USG WOULD ALSO REFRAIN AT PRESENT FROM SUPPLYING ANY ARMS TO SOMALIA WHICH HE SAID WOULD DIRECTLY OR INDIRECTLY BE USED AGAINST ETHIOPIA NOW, AND LATER AGAINST KENYA. HE, LIKE KARIITHI, IS ABSOLUTELY CONVINCED THAT THERE IS NO POSSIBILITY OF MEANINGFUL RAPPROCHEMENT BETWEEN KENYA AND SOMALIA AND THAT CURRENT SOMALAI-SUPPORTED MILITARY OPERATIONS IN ETHIOPIA ARE ONLY A "REHEARSAL" FOR ABSORPTION OF KENYAN NORTHEAST INTO "GREATER SOMALIA".

6. DESPITE GROWING PRESSURES BY ETHIOPIAN GOVERNMENT, KIEREINI SAID THAT KENYA IS AVOIDING FORMAL IMPLEMENTATION OF KENYA-ETHIOPIA MUTUAL DEFENSE PACT ON GROUNDS THAT THERE IS AS YET NO FORMALLY DECLARED WAR. FOR TIME BEING, KIEREINI SAID KENYAN SUPPORT TO ETHIOPIA WOULD BE "PASSIVE", E.G. SPREVENTING SOMALI
SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 04 NAIROB 10318 121537Z

SHIFTAS FROM TRANSITING KENYAN TERRITORY, POLICE COOPERATION IN BORDER AREA, ETC.

7. WHILE REFTEL INDICATES SOME DELAY IN IMPLEMENTATION OF DECISION TO SUPPLY ARMS TO SOMALIA, WE WOULD URGE, EVEN IF OGADEN SITUATION CEASES TO BE OBSTACLE, EXTREME SELECTIVITY IN PROVISION OF ANY "DEFENSIVE" WEAPONS TO SOMALIA. FOR EXPAMPLE, KENYANS WOULD REGARD AS AN UNFRIENDLY ACT OUR PROVISION OF SURFACE-TO-AIR MISSILES TO SOMALIA. ONE OF THE MAJOR REASONS FOR KENYA'S ACQUISITION OF F-5'S IS TO DETER POSSIBLE SOMALIA LAND INVASION INTO KENYA (WHICH KENYANS COULD NOT AT PRESENT REPULSE) THROUGH THREAT OF POSSIBLE F-5 BOMBINGS BEHIND SOMALI LINES. AN EFFECTIVE SOMALIA ANTI-AIRCRAFT CAPABILITY WOULD LARGELY NEGATE DETERRENT EFFECT OF KENYAN F-5'S.

8. IN SUM, WHILE WE RECOGNIZE BENEFITS OF ELIMINATING SOVIET INFLUENCE IN SOMALIA (AS DO KENYANS), WE RISK DAMAGING OUR EXCELLENT BILATERAL RELATIONS WITH KENYA UNLESS WE CAN FIND WAY OF IMPLEMENTING ARMS SUPPLY DECISION WHICH WOULD CONVINCINGLY ELIMATE ANY DIRECT OR INDIRECT THREAT TO KENYAN SECURITY. WE WOULD SUPPOSE THAT ANY TYPES OF RESTRICTIONS ON ANY MILITARY ASSISTANCE WE PROVIDE TO SOMALIA WHICH WOULD ALLAY KENYAN FEARS WOULD BE AT SAME TIME UNACCEPTABLE TO SOMALIA. ON BALANCE, WE ARE INCLINED TO ACCEPT PESSIMISTIC KENYAN ASSESSMENT OF SOMALIA'S INTENTION IN LONGER TERM TO SEIZE NORTHEASTERN KENYA WHEN FEASIBLE.

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